

## The planting of the Swiss colony at New Glarus, Wis. /

**THE PLANTING OF THE SWISS COLONY AT NEW GLARUS, WIS. BY JOHN LUCHSINGER.<sup>1</sup>**

1 Mr. Luchsinger's admirable paper, "The Swiss Colony of New Glarus," in *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, viii., pp. 411–439, attracted much attention. It was the first monograph on the planting of an organized foreign colony in Wisconsin. At the present time, when, through the joint efforts of the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Historical Society, a healthy popular interest is being awakened in the history of the several foreign groups in this state, there has been a renewed call for the Luchsinger paper, but the volume containing it has long since been out of print. New and important facts, too, have been discovered by Mr. Luchsinger, and at my request he has rewritten his article, greatly enriched by additional documentary material, and brought down to date. It is practically a new monograph, drawn from original sources, and is of great value to all students of our composite nationality.

Mr. Luchsinger was born in the canton of Glarus, Switzerland, June 29, 1839, removing to America with his parents when but six years of age. He settled in New Glarus, Wisconsin, in 1856, and has for many years been prominent among the Swiss-Americans of Green county. He represented his district in the assemblies of 1873, 1876–78, and 1887. He is a lawyer, resident at Monroe. All footnotes to this paper are by the author, unless otherwise signed.— Ed.

Since writing a sketch of the Swiss colony of New Glarus, at the request of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, thirteen years ago, many changes have taken place in the conditions of the colony. Steadily prosperous, it has thriven beyond the most sanguine hopes of its projectors. Railroad and telegraph facilities have placed the hitherto secluded settlement in direct communication with the rest of the world. Modern thought and habit have come with modern inventions, but the people remain substantially the

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same. True, the first colonists have nearly all gone to their well-earned rest, but their direct descendants occupy the places of those who have died. The natural dislike of those of 336 other nationalities to settle in a community so distinctly Swiss, and the inborn love of the Swiss for his own countrymen, have tended to prevent the mixture and assimilation of nationalities which is continually going on in other parts of the United States. New Glarus is still a Swiss colony, as much so as it was twenty years ago. In view of the fact that there are still a few of the first colonists yet living, from whom much information could be gathered which soon would be lost beyond recovery, it has been suggested by the editor of the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* that I rewrite the history of the colony at this time. In response to this desire, I have collected material not hitherto attainable or known, and hope to be able to do such justice to the subject as it deserves, and to merit in a greater degree the favor with which the sketch in vol. viii. was received.

### **The Colony .**

In the northern part of Green county, Wisconsin, at the terminus of the Brodhead and New Glarus branch of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway, is situated the township and village of New Glarus. This village and township were so named, after the town and canton of Glarus in eastern Switzerland, of which place nearly all of the inhabitants are natives or the descendants of natives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The canton of Glarus is one of the wildest and most mountainous in Switzerland. Two narrow valleys, traversed by swift mountain torrents fed by snows and glaciers, divide the canton into two sections. At the head of the greater valley, Gross-Thal, is a high mountain pass leading into the ancient canton of Uri. At the head of the smaller valley, Klein-Thal, is a similar pass leading into the Grisons, and thence on to upper Italy. Both of these passes, before the time of steam and railways, were much-used highways between Italy and Germany: in times of peace, for traders and travellers; in times of war, by armies of different nations of Europe. Judging from the situation of the canton and the names of localities, these valleys were originally peopled from both the north and south sides of the

Alps. Undoubtedly, in the exterminating wars of ancient times, fugitives from religious and political proscription found a stern but safe asylum in the narrow, deep valleys, and on the steep mountain sides of Glarus. The southern element seems to have been strongest. Dark hair and complexions prevail among the people; and numerous family names ending with *i* or *y*—as Marti, Klasy, Tschudi, Trumpi, etc.—indicate an Italian origin. Yet the blue eyes, fair hair, and complexion of the north Germans are by no means rare; and family names having an undoubted German origin,—as Schindler, Elmer, Luchsinger, and Schmid,—are plenty. Judging from these indications, the Goth and the Latin contributed in this borderland to the formation of the present race, and the result has been a people in whom the steady, honest purpose, industrious and frugal habits of the German race are blended with the impulsive, passionate, and enduring qualities of the Latin,—the mixture being the present persistent, enterprising, frugal, and industrious people of the region, of strong vitality and physique, and capacity for adaptation to all climates and conditions. From this source has sprung the healthy colony of New Glarus, Wisconsin, the subject of this sketch.

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Pleasantly situated on the banks of Little Sugar river, on ground rising gently towards the west, and at the foot of a high ridge of hills on the east, the village lies in the midst of rather rough yet pleasing scenery. Pleasant valleys, dotted with good farm houses and spacious barns, greet the eye to the north. South and west, fertile hills and uplands, alternating fields and timber; are in plain view for miles.

The first sight from the top of the high hill to the east is a pleasant surprise: the whole village and surroundings lie spread out beneath your feet. The settlement presents a romantic and somewhat un-American appearance; there is something about its appearance that cannot well be described. Perhaps it is the diversified style of the buildings, perhaps the queer but plain old stone church-tower.—so unlike anything seen elsewhere in this country,—that causes it to seem different from the average Wisconsin country village. There are many fine dwelling-houses, but the common practice in New

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Glarus of building close to the edge of the streets detracts somewhat from their beauty. The village has about a hundred and fifty dwellings, a flour mill, a brewery, a cheese factory, lumber and stock yards, stores, shops, hotel, and saloons. The population is about six hundred. A physician, a preacher of the Swiss Reformed church, and three school teachers, reside in the place. There are besides, artisans, merchants, and laborers of all trades and occupations needed by 22 338 a community of this size. The people of the village, and also of the surrounding country, among themselves speak the German-Swiss dialect almost exclusively, just as it is spoken in Switzerland. All school and town meetings, and all legal and other business, unless transacted in writing, are of necessity conducted in this language. Many of those who were born here require an interpreter when called upon to testify as witnesses in the courts. A stranger stopping here unawares could easily imagine that he had dropped upon a district in Switzerland. The sounds and sights in the village, and the bold character of the surrounding hills, would strengthen the impression.

The Swiss occupy in addition to the village, almost the whole township,—three or four families of Norwegians living on the northern border. Fully two-thirds of the adjoining town of Washington, and large portions of many other towns in Green and Dane counties, are also thus occupied. The number of Swiss and their immediate descendants in Green county alone, exceeds eight thousand, comprising about one-third of the entire population. Other centres of business and trade have risen among this people, but Blew Glarus is the point from which the Swiss element radiates, and where it is chiefly concentrated. These Swiss-Americans are noted for their industry, frugality, and economy,—qualities which have been bred in their bone and blood for ages. Centuries of hard struggle to obtain a bare subsistence from the sterile mountains of the fatherland have formed the principles which on this more generous soil, and with place to grow, have led to competence. Toilsome struggles with poverty and adverse nature, far from being disadvantageous, are important factors in the building of that strong form of character which can adapt itself to circumstances, and ultimately bring to its possessor the best of life. In America, the

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sterile hills of New England are a notable example of this. What similar extent of territory in the United States has produced an equal number of successful men and women? One cannot help observing, on entering the section occupied by these Swiss-Americans, the material results of their inherited qualities. The houses 339 are roomy, comfortable, and in many cases elegant; barns and other outbuildings are spacious and substantial. Nowhere in Green county is so much money expended in permanent improvements as here, notwithstanding the fact that the face of the country is rough and often rocky, and the soil on the whole rather below the average in quality and depth.

Unlike most of the settlers of southern Wisconsin, this people at an early period betook themselves to dairy farming and the raising of cattle, to which branches of husbandry they were by training and habit fully adapted: these being of necessity the only forms of agriculture profitable or even possible among the mountains of their old home. Then again, the land in this vicinity is on the whole better suited for such purposes than for tillage. The hill pastures, though scant, produce sweet and nutritious grasses, while the natural meadows in the bottoms yield an abundance of good hay. Springs and streams of pure, cool water abound, almost every farm being supplied with running water. All these are necessary to excellence of dairy products, and to the health of the stock.

The people as a rule are hard-working, believing that old-fashioned labor is the proper means to a livelihood and competence. They are economical to a fault,—in many cases to the verge of penuriousness. The rule is, to spend less than they earn, and to make no display beyond their means. In view of this, the mystery is easily explained why they get on in the world better than others in like or better surroundings, who are so often heard to express wonder how a people who have had so many obstacles to contend with should have done so well. Naturally few of them are involved in debt, and less complaint of hard times is heard there than in many other sections of the country. Industry and economy will produce the same good results in any country not too densely peopled.

## Causes of Emigration .

The causes which led to the establishment of this colony of New Glarus were mainly overpopulation in an unfertile country, and the poverty resulting from scarcity of employment and food. Prior to the year 1844, there was an era of uncommon prosperity throughout Europe. Along peace following the destructive wars of Napoleon had repopulated the nations, had rebuilt the cities, and restored confidence in the business world. Trade and manufactures had greatly increased, the latter particularly in Switzerland. where the numberless swift mountain streams afford unlimited and cheap propelling power for machinery, and where the supply of labor is cheap and abundant. The large numbers of young Swiss who formerly were compelled to seek work in foreign lands found employment in these home industries. No longer was Switzerland the recruiting ground for the armies of Europe. The country needed the blood and brains and muscle, and enlistments were forbidden by Swiss law. This was a golden era; every one prospered, and the people were content to remain in the land of their birth. But about 1844 a general stagnation in business occurred, overproduction of manufactures glutted the markets, and the trade in and demand for Swiss goods declined; large numbers of workmen were thrown out of employment. In addition to this, a partial failure of the Swiss crops caused the necessities of life to rise in price, distress became general and great among the working classes, and it became a serious question how to employ and feed the ever-increasing population.

In some parts of Switzerland, the land fit for cultivation is very limited in extent, and is owned by the different municipalities. It is divided into greater or smaller parcels according to the number of adult male citizens, and these parcels are annually allotted for the purpose of cultivation, free of charge. As the population increases the parcels become smaller, so that at this time in Glarus they ranged from one hundred and sixty to six hundred and forty square yards for the head of each family, according as the parish to which 341 he belonged was rich or poor. In many instances the parishes also own the

forests, and the summer pastures on the Alps, which are leased from time to time to dairymen. The income from these sources is applied to defray in part the public expenses, including the support of schools and churches; in consequence, taxation is light. Every citizen in Glarus is entitled to the use of one of these portions of tillable land, which he may cultivate by himself or by proxy. When a citizen emigrates, the value of his allotment, together with the value of his interest in the rest of the common property, is estimated, and paid to him in money. Practically, this is selling out his vested rights in the property of the community, and amounts really to a premium on emigration. These small parcels are mainly planted with potatoes, beans, or other annual crops. The authorities are so careful of the food supply, that on these allotments no one is allowed to dig even his own potatoes until they are fully ripe. As the harvest approaches, watchmen are employed day and night to guard the crop, and a heavy fine is imposed upon the luckless individual who may be detected in gratifying his relish for new potatoes before the law has pronounced them ripe. The production of grain is quite impossible,—there is not enough land fit for such crops, and the use of horses, plows, and machinery is almost unknown. The people depend for bread-stuffs on Russia, Italy, and Hungary. Hence bread is seldom cheap. In ordinary and even prosperous times, the supply in most families is limited. The poor are seldom able to eat as much as they desire. In times of depression, the food of the working classes is mainly potatoes, with salt or green cheese (called *schabzieger*) for seasoning.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, viii., p. 414, for description of methods of cheese-making.— Ed.

Coffee is made mainly from chicory and is used without sugar, and often without milk. Close economy in everything, from the smallest to the greatest article of food, clothing, or other necessity, is rigidly required by the conditions of the surroundings, in order to be able to exist. A wasteful person is regarded as almost criminal.

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Even such economy as this could not prevent the distress and impoverishment from becoming alarming, when in 1844 the great sources of income dried up—the factories

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having either ceased work or shortened time and wages The authorities and leading citizens of Glarus cast about for ways and means by which the consequent distress could be relieved. Public meetings were held to discuss the subject of emigration as a remedy. The matter was discussed pro and con in every cottage and household. The timid and conservative freely quoted the old saying, “ *Bleibe im land und Ernähre dich redlich* ” (Remain in the land and support yourself honestly). But the courageous and progressive invented another saying to match it. “ *Bleibet im land und fresset einander* ” (Remain in the land and devour each other). The prospect was, that the latter saying was in a fair way to be exemplified. Human labor was daily becoming plentier and cheaper, and food scarcer and dearer.

### **Selection of a Site .**

The agitation finally culminated in the idea that an organized emigration, under the care and control of the government, would be the best, surest, and most reliable method of affording the necessary relief. At a public meeting called at Schwanden, a committee was appointed to confer with and ask the aid and co-operation of the government of the canton. The council of the canton approved of the project so far as to appropriate fifteen hundred florins (about six hundred dollars), for the purpose of sending to America—as the children of Israel did to the land of Canaan—two men who were to view the country, and if they found it suitable, to locate a tract favorable for a colony. An Emigration Society was at the same time formed, composed of intelligent and prominent men, who took charge of this fund, which was increased by subscription from the parishes and individuals to two thousand dollars. This society appointed as pioneers to look up a location, Judge Nicholas Duerst, then forty-eight years old, and Fridolin Streiff, a blacksmith, twenty-nine years old, both 343 of them men of courage and endurance, and of more than average intelligence. Duerst agreed to assist in selecting and purchasing the lands for the colony, and to advise and remain with the colonists until they were fairly planted in their new home Streiff was to remain three years with the colony, and to direct and control its work, and also to extend his assistance and counsel to all requiring it. He was also to expend properly, for the

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benefit of the colony, whatever funds were placed in his hands for that purpose. Before the three years had expired, Streiff, with wise foresight, saw that the colony would succeed, and sent for his wife and children to join him. Previous to the appointment of Streiff, the society had appointed M. Marti, a teacher, as Judge Duerst's companion, for the reason that he had some knowledge of the English tongue, but his timidity and indecision were such that he withdrew on the very eve of departure, and Streiff was thereupon selected. To supply the defect of their ignorance of the English language, the pioneers were authorized to employ a competent interpreter on their arrival in America. All these preparations, because of their strangeness and novelty, consumed so much time that it was not until March 8, 1845. that the two leaders were able to start on their journey in search of a new home.

They carried with them the written instructions of the society, as follows: The two pioneers are to depart immediately, so as to be in time to embark on the packet ship which leaves Havre, France, on the sixteenth of March.<sup>1</sup> Drafts to the amount of six thousand, three hundred and sixty florins (about two thousand, six hundred dollars), being sixty florins for each of the one hundred and six prospective emigrants enrolled, for the purchase of the necessary land, will be placed in their hands. These funds they are, however, not to draw upon until the purchase of the lands has been completed. On their arrival in New

<sup>1</sup> There were no railroads in Switzerland at that time, and only for a short distance in France: hence eight days were allowed for the journey from Glarus through France to Havre.

344 York, they are to proceed without delay to William H. Blumer, a fellow Swiss, living in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and request him to support them with his counsel and experience in exploration, and to assist them in making the purchase of land. In respect to this purchase, they are to consider particularly the instruction: that the locality chosen shall be similar to that of Glarus in climate, soil, and general characteristics. That the soil shall be suitable for raising stock, vegetables, fruit, and grains. They are not bound strictly to purchase government land. If they deem it best to purchase a portion partly

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cultivated, they may do so; but they shall strictly keep in mind that each colonist shall have for his sixty florins, twenty acres of land, or nearly that area. They shall endeavor to purchase land in one body, and shall duly consider communication with other inhabited portions of the country, such as by roads, streams, railroads, etc. After completing the purchase, the tract is to be so divided that each colonist shall receive a proper proportion of timber, pasture, and tillable land. The respective portions shall be assigned to the colonists on their arrival, and the pioneers shall cause the proper surveys to be made. and shall immediately prepare for the reception of the first lot of colonists. who are to wait at St. Louis for further directions. They shall provide shelter, food, and clothing for the immediate needs of the colonists, and shall charge the same to their account. There shall be provision made immediately for the cultivation of grain for the use of the people. and the necessary number of cattle shall be provided. It might be of advantage, these careful instructions say, to at first cultivate a small portion of land in common, and then to assign each colonist a portion of the produce. This plan might be the most speedy to provide necessary food for all. The purchase of land shall be in the name of the Emigration Society of the Canton of Glarus. Duerst shall prepare a vital record. numbered according to number of colonists, and note all deaths or increase, giving dates. The pioneers shall endeavor to use their influence with the colonists, to the end that a church and schools may be established as soon as practicable; that the poor, sick, widows, and orphans may be relieved; and that the rules of the Emigration Society be observed and executed. The society shall be the owner of the lands until the sum advanced shall be repaid by the colonists. Duerst shall receive for his services one dollar per day, and his necessary traveling expenses. Streiff shall receive free passage to the settlement, and free entertainment until the departure of Duerst. For his other services, he shall be paid such a compensation as Duerst shall recommend to be proper. Duerst shall keep a correct daily journal of the traveling and other expenses.

Instructed, fortified, and also hindered in a measure, by these rules, the two pioneers embarked at Havre on the sixteenth of March, 1845, and after a tedious and stormy

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passage in a sailing packet arrived at New York on the sixth of May. On the tenth of May, they were joined at Easton, Pennsylvania, by Joshua Frey, whom Blumer had selected as their guide on account of his intelligence, and knowledge of the usages and language of the country. Frey kept a journal, in which he made daily entries of the doings of the trio, and from which it appears that without farther delay they proceeded in the mail coach to Somerville, New York, and from thence by railroad to New York city, and on the same day went by the steamer "Empire" to Albany, thence again by rail to Buffalo, at which place they arrived May 14.

The diary states as follows: "Took passage on steamer Bunker Hill for Detroit same evening, arrived at Detroit May 16. Next day proceeded across the state of Michigan by stage and rail to St. Joseph. Thence by steamer to Chicago, arriving there on the morn of the nineteenth. We went to the United States land office in that town and examined the maps and plats, and found that nearly all timber land in that land district was either pre-empted or sold, but a great amount of prairie land was yet open for entry. Next day took stage for Dixon, on Rock river. On the way we crossed immense prairies, reaching an unbroken level so far as the eye could see. The mail road passes through Aurora, the neighborhood of which is quite well settled. 346 Arrived at Dixon, May 21, having rode all night. We went to the United States land office and found an immense quantity of prairie land yet subject to entry, but the woodland was mostly all taken. The same afternoon we traveled northward along Rock river to Oregon City. May 23, we again returned to Dixon. The land on both sides of Rock river is very fine and productive. May 24, we went by stage to Princeton, a little village surrounded by rich lands. 25th, being Sunday, we rested. 26th, examined a tract of timber known as Devil's Grove, but found that it was already entered; could have bought 240 acres for \$1,000. 27th, went to Peru on the Illinois river. 28th, as the water was too low in the river for boats to land, we hired a team to take us to Hennepin. 30th, went on steamer to St. Louis, where we arrived June 1. As the expected emigrants had not yet come, we authorized Mr. Wild of that city to take charge of them

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when they arrived, to send us word of their arrival, and to provide temporary quarters for them.”

The journal then relates in detail the travels of the three men by stage, horseback, and on foot through Missouri, touching St. Charles, Warrenton. Danville, Mexico, Florida, Palmyra, and Marion. From Marion they took the steamer “Di Vernon” to Keokuk, in Iowa Territory, thence across the country to Winchester, Fairfield, and Mt. Pleasant, spending some time at the United States land office at Fairfield; thence eastward to Bloomington, on the Mississippi; thence to Galena, “which is a town of considerable importance, the head of navigation, and the centre of the lead-mining region. Although we had traveled now through a number of states, we had not yet decided to buy anywhere, for the reason either that wood or water was wanting, the location unhealthy, or not a sufficient tract of suitable land in one body; so we traveled farther into Wisconsin Territory, touching Platteville and Belmont, and arriving at Mineral Point June 16. At the land office, we really found a prospect to make suitable selections. Having at this place received a letter from Mr. Blumer, stating that the emigrants might be expected 347 at Milwaukee, we at once proceeded to that place. but were disappointed. At the Milwaukee land office we found, after examination, that the land in that district was not favorable for our emigrants. On the 24th of June, we therefore left Milwaukee via Troy, to Exeter, in Green county. Here, at last, we found in town 4, range 7, a large extent of land suitable for our purpose. containing the prescribed qualities, as: healthy climate, copious springs, fertile soil, timber, and prospect of convenient market for produce. After several more fruitless trips in different directions southward to Como, Illinois, and northwest to the Wisconsin river, we returned to Mineral Point, where we met Theodore Rodolf, who received us kindly and gave us his advice and help, and accompanied us on several trips in this district. On our return to Mineral Point. on July 17, we finally concluded to purchase near Exeter, Green county, twelve hundred acres of the land we had seen on June 27, and in addition eighty acres of good timber. We further bought necessary provisions and tools, with which we at once proceeded to the colony land, and Duerst and Streiff began to build huts. On the

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twenty-fourth of July the surveyor arrived, and with the kind help of Frederick Rodolf,<sup>1</sup> a brother of Theodore, we finished the survey and also the building of two temporary huts on the 30th.” At this point, Frey's journal closes with the remark that on the sixth of August he bade farewell to Messrs. Duerst and Streiff, and departed for his home in Pennsylvania.

<sup>1</sup> Still living at South Wayne, Wisconsin.

Judge Duerst wrote on August 19, 1845, to the Emigration Society, Switzerland: “We have selected and bought what we believe to be a favorable point for settlement. The land lies eight miles from Exeter, and thirty-five miles from Mineral Point, where great markets are held. It contains mostly fertile soil, good water in springs and streams, and sufficient forests. One of the streams running through our land has sufficient power for one or two mills, and we indulge in the pleasing hope that our fellow-citizens 348 who may emigrate, will, if they are industrious and steady, find themselves in time well rewarded for their labor. The colonists, one hundred and eight souls, have arrived after a long journey, in which they experienced many hardships and disappointments, and are so destitute of everything that we were at once obliged to draw upon our credit in New York, so as to be able to supply their needs until the next harvest. We have provided temporary shelters for them, and have allotted the parcels of land to each colonist. Have also drawn rules and by-laws for the government of the colony, and for best managing its possessions, and have elected four trustees,—Fridolin Streiff, Balthasar Schindler, Fridolin Babler, and David Schindler, the last-named to act as secretary.”

Some of the regulations laid down for the management of the colony are worthy to be recorded as curiosities: “Section I.—Every one is obliged to take the land which he draws by lot. and whether it be better or worse to accept the same without protest. Section II.—The main street from east to west shall be thirty feet wide, but the other streets shall be only fourteen feet wide.<sup>1</sup> Further, all creeks, streams, and springs shall be the common property of all lot owners. The colonists shall be obliged to assist each other in building houses and barns. As soon as the patents for the lands shall have been signed by the

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president of the United States, and not before, each owner shall have the right to dig and prospect for mineral. Should such be found, then the lot on which it is found shall revert to the society, and the owner shall receive therefor an appropriate compensation.”

1 This was bringing the narrow, contracted ideas of land in Switzerland, to the broad lands of America, with a vengeance.

Of course these and other regulations from the same source were operative only for a short time, and until the people had become acquainted with the laws and customs of this country which govern such matters. Taking everything into consideration, in the light of better judgment and later experience, a better location might have been selected,—richer, deeper, and more level soil, shorter distance to markets, and other advantages, could have been had at that time with as little cost as the site chosen; but viewing the result, it is doubtful if under more favorable conditions a better or even as good showing would have been made. The mountaineer from old Glarus seems to have more readily taken root and thriven on the rocky hillsides and pleasant valleys of New Glarus, than he would have done in what we now consider more favorable localities. The energy developed in subduing the rocky soil, and felling the gnarled timber, seemed to give its possessors an impetus that carried them to competence and prosperity with a force that hardly would have been developed under easier beginnings. Had the pioneers not literally followed the society's orders to purchase twelve hundred acres in one body, it would have been better, as much rough and worthless land was included, which could have been avoided and valuable land taken instead. But they thought themselves bound to follow their instructions strictly and conscientiously, and they deserve a full measure of approval for their work.

### **The Migration .**

And now to relate the story of the migration of the colonists to the place so selected for them. The society's committee was at first inclined to postpone the emigration until the

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spring of 1845, so as to give sufficient time for the pioneers to view the land, and, if a location was made, to make ample preparations for the reception of the people on their arrival. But the spirit of emigration had thoroughly permeated the whole community, and was at fever heat. The pressure was threatening to overthrow all the nicely-considered plans for an organized emigration. To avoid the consequences of a threatened irregular exodus, and in order to retain control of the movement, the committee was compelled to act promptly. The sixteenth of April, 1845, was therefore fixed upon for the departure. On account of the number of emigrants and the amount of their baggage, the 350 water route down the Rhine to Rotterdam was determined upon, and preparations made accordingly. The emigrants were notified to assemble, and hold themselves in readiness to embark at the time stated; and the respective amounts necessary to defray the passage and expenses were to be paid into a common fund, either by the colonists themselves, or, when unable, by the parishes to which they belonged. The whole scheme resembled a stock company, and each emigrant represented a share and was assessed in proportion for all expenses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reader cannot fail to note strong points of unconscious resemblance between this organization and that of the Pilgrim Fathers, two and a quarter centuries before.— Ed.

In the night of April 15–16, the arrangements were finally completed, and on the morning of the sixteenth the committee proceeded to the place of departure,— the so-called “Biäsche,” a landing place on the Linth canal, which runs alongside the Linth river, a tributary of the Rhine in Glarus. On the banks of this canal, on this gloomy April morning, one hundred and ninety-three persons of all ages and conditions were collected in the pelting rain. Only one hundred and forty had been expected and provided for, but the desire to emigrate under the protection of an organization had become so great that almost at the last moment fifty-three more had, unannounced, joined the party and determined to share its fortunes. Such were the colonists who were in readiness to venture into that strange, far-off land, called America, of which they had read and spoken, heard and dreamed so much. It was said to be the home and refuge of the poor, where those

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who came with stout hands and willing hearts were sure eventually to reap a rich reward, and where, better than all, their children would have bread enough to eat. Yet among all those who were so ready and anxious to leave, few could look back upon the frowning yet beloved mountains, on whose rugged sides they had left their poor homes, and humble but kind friends and kindred, without feeling that their courage was tried to the utmost. But the thought gave them firmness, that in the beautiful 351 land they were leaving, increasing and hopeless poverty was ever present, and want and oppression were the lot of the poor, with no ray of hope for the better.

With tearful eyes and hearts full of grief, they took their last leave of friends and fatherland; and with few earthly goods, but rich in firm resolves and hopes, they embarked in an open barge. Before starting, Landamman C. Jenny,<sup>1</sup> representing the government of the canton of Glarus, addressed the colonists in words full of feeling. He urged upon them the necessity of industry, harmony, and unity; and commending them to the care of kind Providence, bade them God-speed and farewell. And go, amid the tears and kind wishes of an immense concourse of friends and relatives. the boat-load of emigrants started on their way and slowly began a wearisome journey towards an unknown land. At the start, the colonists chose two of their number. George Legler and Jacob Grob, to act as leaders and spokesmen during the migration, to exercise general care and supervision over everything connected with the journey, to preserve order, and to hear and redress all complaints. The colonists on their part promised to obey the directions and abide by the decisions of these leaders.

<sup>1</sup> Died at Glarus, May 25, 1892.

Before reaching Zurich, the weather had become inclement and snow fell, the closely-packed open vessel soon becoming uncomfortable and unfit for the passage of so many. So inadequate was the space, in consequence of the unexpected addition to the number of the company, that there was no room to lie down; and when night came, those who could slept as well as possible in a sitting posture, At Zurich, it became evident that this

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crowded condition must be relieved, or great distress would prevail, especially among the women and children. The Swiss bundesrath was at that time in session at Zurich, and the Glarus representative, Cosmos Blumer, kindly provided teams and covered wagons, in which the women and children found more comfortable passage, and in which they followed the vessel on shore until they all reached Basle, about fifty miles from 352 Glarus. Mathias Duerst, one of the number, a man of more than ordinary intelligence and a close observer, kept a diary of the events on the journey, from which the author will freely quote.<sup>1</sup>

1 It has been kindly loaned to the author by Miss Salome Duerst, a sister of Mathias, and herself one of the few surviving pioneer colonists.

Says Duerst: "We arrived at Basle on the 18th. The cold rain was falling in streams, and the utter wretchedness and discomfort were enough to chill the ardor of the strongest among us wet, shivering men. The wagons containing our wives and children arrived about the same time; and although they had been packed. in like a lot of goods, we were glad that they had not been exposed to the cold and wet as we had been."

On the nineteenth, the emigrants again embarked. this time on a steamboat on the Rhine. The boat ran only in the daytime, and stopped every night, usually at some town or village, where the men would get out and purchase provisions for the next day,—for only the passage had been contracted for; every one had to provide food as best he could, whenever opportunity offered. There were no berths or beds on the boat, and sleep was had either on the bare planks of the vessel's deck or in such lodging-houses at the stopping places as could harbor the crowd at cheap rates. In this comfortless, wearisome manner, they proceeded down the Rhine northward. Loud and deep were the murmurs of discontent and exasperation at the want of consideration and business tact of those who had contracted the expedition of the emigrants in this slow, miserable manner; and it sometimes required the utmost tact and persuasion on the part of the leaders, to preserve the peace and prevent open mutiny and disorder. What at first appeared the cheapest

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route proved, in consequence of the delays and increased cost of subsistence, to be by far the dearest.

At last, on the thirtieth of April, they arrived at Rotterdam, where they were loaded on two coasting vessels, wherein they were to be carried to New Dieppe, the seaport. In the night a severe storm arose, which lasted until 353 the morning. It was a terrible experience, for none of the colonists were accustomed to the sea. May 2, they arrived at New Dieppe, and at once went on board of the ocean vessel, which was a fine three-master with eighty-eight berths. On the third they bought straw for their berths, and could now for the first time sleep with some comfort: but as no cooking arrangements had yet been placed in the ship, they were obliged to kindle fires on the land, and cook outdoors, in gypsy fashion. Owing to the ship's incomplete accommodations for carrying passengers, the company was delayed until the thirteenth, on which day the ship weighed anchor, and the departing Swiss bade farewell to Europe—nearly all of them forever. A tug pulled the vessel out about six miles, when her sails were set, and day by day she plowed her way westward, sometimes tossed by storms and again almost becalmed.

At that period, on sailing vessels, each passenger or family cooked his or their own food, and among a large number of passengers the difficulty of getting a chance to cook in the one small kitchen was often extreme. The strong and healthy came first, the weakly were crowded out; during storms no fires were permitted, and the passengers were sometimes from four to five days without warm food or drink. The sick and the children suffered terribly at such times. The miserable ship biscuit was as fit for food as so much leather. Those who had dried meats and fruits, or cheese, fared quite well, but others suffered from hunger. Two and a half pounds of salt pork, a half pound of flour, two pounds of rice, and as much ship biscuit as could be used, were the weekly ration for each full passenger.

On the twenty-eighth, the company were saddened by two deaths, the wife of Rudolf Stauffacher, and a six-months-old child of Henry Stauffacher; they died within a few hours of each other, and in less than two hours after their death were wound in sheets,

weighted with sand, and after a short burial service read by Jacob Grob, were sunk into the trackless ocean. The wretched quality of the food dealt out to the emigrants had by this time occasioned 23 354 diarrhœa and dysentery among many. All were so weakened that despondency and discontent prevailed, and many the complaints and quarrels which the leaders were called upon to hear and quell. But in time more contentment prevailed, for complaints did not mend matters.

On the twenty eighth and twenty-ninth of June, land was in sight. The warm American air seemed to be full of reviving qualities, the sick grew better, the despondent gained courage; and when on the thirtieth day of June, after a voyage of forty-nine days full of storms and hardships, the vessel landed at Baltimore, all were on their feet cleansed and dressed in their best, ready and impatient to greet their adopted land and to found new homes in the then far west. The orders were, that the emigrants should proceed to St. Louis, where directions would be found to guide them to the selected locality. After some discussion, it was voted, in view of the miserable treatment on ship-Board, that the firm to whom they were directed by the shippers at Rotterdam to apply for further transportation, were unworthy of confidence, and a committee of three were selected to contract for the passage to St. Louis. This, in view of the fact that an immense amount of extra baggage was to be transported, was a difficult matter. The emigrants and their friends, in their ignorance of the extent and resources of this country, had taken along not only their clothing and bedding, but also their kitchen and table furniture, pots, pans, and kettles, and the mechanics had complete kits of tools. The belief was, that even should it be found that America could supply such articles, they would be much inferior to those brought from the old country. Thus there were many thousands of pounds of excess baggage to provide for. A contract was finally made with a Jew, to carry the company to St. Louis for twenty dollars each adult; children from four to twelve years were rated at half-fare; those younger than four years were to be carried free; while the excess baggage was to be charged for at the rate of a dollar per hundred weight. These negotiations took several days.

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On the fourth of July, Mathias Duerst states in his diary: "We saw the most imposing ceremony that any of us ever saw in our lives. It was the funeral obsequies of the former president of the nation, Gen. Jackson. The space in my whole diary would be too small to describe the splendors and the solemnities we witnessed. Thousands on thousands of horsemen were in the procession, and the honors done to the memory of the great man who, like Cincinnatus, was several times called from the plow to the head of the nation, were impressive and grand. At this point, two of our families not having been provided with any means for further travel, made known their condition to the leaders, and it was determined to advance them fifteen dollars each out of the small relief fund of the colony, so as to provide them with food until the men could get employment, which they accepted with many thanks, and they remained at Baltimore."

Later, Duerst writes: "On the fifth of July, one mile out of the city, we got on the cars for the first time. Then we experienced the greatest pleasure in our lives. None of us had ever before rode on a railroad. We passed with the speed of the wind through splendid fields and wooded valleys. The eye feasted on rapid changes, on rich grain fields, and fruitful orchards; and then we went by tasty, elegant dwellings. All this proclaimed American wealth and prosperity to us, and the troubles and hardships of the weeks just passed were forgotten in the hope that some day we might call a like-appearing country our home. The train took us to the Susquehanna river at Columbia, where we left the cars and loaded our baggage and persons on the canal boats which were to carry us to Pittsburgh. These were totally inadequate for our numbers. We were packed in like a herd of sheep. Thirty to thirty-five human beings were put in a space twelve by seven feet; many could not even sit, but had to stand up the whole night. In the morning, more boats were provided. They were drawn by one horse each, and we had plenty of time to step out and buy milk or other provisions, the speed was so slow, and the stoppages many. At Hollidaysburg, the canal terminated; 356 our boats with all their contents were loaded on an iron track and drawn up the steep mountain side by a wire rope attached to a steam-engine on the top, and were conveyed down on the other side, sometimes with horses and engines, and

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sometimes of our own motion. At Johnstown, our boats again were let into the canal. and proceeded as before. It is astonishing what works these Americans have performed.”

Duerst further says: “We passed through a delightful region, smiling with productiveness and plenty, log-houses alternating with fine mansions, and women in good clothes and bonnets on were milking cows; but this is about all the work they do, so far as I saw, for we perceived even in the log-houses that they sat in rocking chairs, clothed with bonnets and shawls, with arms crossed, sitting like noble ladies.”

At Pittsburgh, on the evening of the tenth, they embarked on a steamboat, and steamed down the Ohio river. “Excepting that the wife of one of our emigrants gave birth to a fine boy, on the first night, and that our steamer ran aground while racing with another, there was nothing worthy of mention.” The captain of the vessel, through an interpreter, informed himself of the purpose of the emigrants, and bluntly told them they were fools to make such a journey for the sake of getting twenty acres of land with the privilege of paying for it, — that twenty acres in this country was nothing; it was not worth while building a house on. In a few years, by working at their trades or occupations, they could save enough money to buy ten times that amount of land. When the emigrants would not be dissuaded from their set purpose, he indignantly turned his back, and said he would not waste more words on such fools. At Cincinnati, three of the company tired of the seemingly endless journey, and were persuaded by friends living at that place to remain; several had already dropped off at Pittsburgh, in the same way. The wonder is, under the circumstances, that more did not detach themselves, especially those who were mechanics, for wages in the cities were about two dollars a day for skilled labor, and food and clothing were then very cheap. Nothing seemed, however, to be able to turn the main body from their purpose. The summer heat by day, the torment of myriads of mosquitoes by night, the crowded quarters, and the inferior food, were not calculated to elevate their spirits; but notwithstanding all this, their courage did not give out. On the nineteenth there was another birth of a boy, the third since leaving home.

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On the twenty-third, the company of Swiss emigrants arrived at St. Louis. Here they expected to meet their pioneers, Streiff and Duerst, or at least to find the promised instructions from them; but neither the pioneers nor letters from them, were at St. Louis. There was nothing but a letter from Mr. Blumer, of Allentown, in which he informed them that the pioneers were on the search for land, somewhere in Illinois; but the letter was a month old, and gave no definite information. On the other hand, rumors circulated that the two pioneers had while exploring lost their lives. In the midst of conflicting stories of all kinds, the party and their leaders were in extreme anxiety. Undecided which way to turn, they rented two houses. in which they crowded for temporary shelter, meeting daily for mutual counsel. Some of the party earned a few dollars at odd jobs of work. The suspense finally became unbearable, and on the twenty-fifth it was determined that two of their number. Paulus Grob and Mathias Duerst, should proceed to search for the pioneers. They found a steamer ready to start for Peoria and other points on the Illinois river, and took deck passage, but were obliged on account of the intolerable plague of mosquitoes to change to cabin accommodations before going far. They arrived at Peoria on the night of the thirty-first, but found no tidings. Following a chance hint in Blumer's letter, they proceeded to Peru, Illinois, seventy-five miles across the country. The fare on the steamer was four dollars, which was more money than they had, and they went most of the way on foot.

They relate that immense tracts of prairie were still wild, unenclosed, and open for entry and sale, and they 358 were charmed by the beauty and productiveness of the country. They were hospitably entertained by the settlers on the way, and Duerst relates in his diary: "Every one seems to live in plenty. The tables in the lowliest cabins are as well if not better supplied than those of the best hotels in Switzerland, and the surprise is that they can live in this way, and yet it is said the people only work about one-fourth of the Year; the rest of the year they go hunting, or follow such other amusement as they please. The cattle are no trouble; when night comes, they come of themselves to the dwellings, and so many of the cows are milked as is necessary for the wants of the family, and no more.

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Sheep cost no more than their wool would bring. This seems like a country of marvelous plenty, and the people are extremely friendly.”

They arrived at Peru on the third of August, and on inquiry at the post-office found that the pioneers had been there, had gone to Mineral Point, Wisconsin, and had requested the post-master to forward all mail for them to that locality. This was depressing news. The little money the men had was gone, and it would cost twelve dollars to carry them to Galena. Out of this dilemma they were lifted by a fellow Swiss, John Freuler, who was working at Peru; he generously loaned them the necessary sum until such time as they could repay him. They wrote to St. Louis what the situation was, and hired a team and driver. Duerst thus describes the outfit: “The wagon was a miserable affair without springs, and covered with a torn, dirty rag, but the horses were splendid, fit for princes; it is just the reverse of what it is in the old home. There the carriages are fine and grand, but the horses are miserable things. We fairly flew across the wide prairies, which seemed as wide as the ocean—nothing but sky and grass, no shrub, tree, or human being to be seen.”

On the sixth, they reached Galena, and proceeded northward through the lead-mine region into Wisconsin, traveling mostly on foot, and arriving at Mineral Point next day at 9 o'clock in the evening. In answer to anxious inquiries, they learned that the pioneers were yet thirty-five miles farther on, that they had bought land, and were awaiting the colonists, of whom they had no information, and knew not in what direction to look for them. They determined to go forward, and a helpful German found a team and driver for them, promising to see that it was paid for until they could repay him. They rode twenty-five miles, when darkness overtook them and they were obliged, despite their impatience, to stop over night with a settler. They found, too, they had missed the direct road. Next day they proceeded, and about 2 o'clock in the afternoon stopped at another house, here finding that those they sought were still four miles off. The teamster, desiring to return to Mineral Point, refused to go farther, and the men were obliged to travel on foot in the direction indicated. In due time they saw through an opening in the timber, first some

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huts, and then men at work. The latter approached, and in these they found the long-sought pioneers and friends. As all clasped hands, with tears of joy springing to their eyes, their feelings may better be imagined than described. The joy of that first meeting was something to be remembered by all, so long as life lasted.

The new comers were first refreshed with food and drink, and then shown over the new possession. To their eyes it seemed a splendid sight. Hills and valleys, woods, prairies, and streams, seemed in just the right proportion, all being glorified in the brilliant light of that August day. A halo was cast over all imperfections; in the eyes of the weary wanderers, all things in this land of promise were perfect. It was at once decided that some one should go to St. Louis and guide the other colonists hither. The new comers were anxious to remain and assist in the work of building shelters. Judge Duerst was therefore requested to go for the colonists, and left at once. He arrived at Galena on the evening of the next day, intending there to take river passage to St. Louis. Early next morning he went to the steamboat landing. While there, some one casually remarked that a large party of immigrants had arrived the evening before from St. Louis on the very steamer on which he was about to take down passage. Curiosity caused him to make further inquiries, 360 when to his astonishment he found that those whom he was going to escort from St. Louis had arrived. The delight of this meeting can well be imagined.

All were eager to leave immediately for their new home. Duerst directed that the able-bodied men should start in advance, and assist in preparing for the reception and shelter of the main body, while he would make some necessary arrangements and purchases, and follow as soon as possible. On the afternoon of the same day, eighteen men started on foot for the settlement, a distance of sixty-two miles. Such was their eagerness, that they travelled all night and the next day, without stopping, except to partake of food. On the evening of the second day, they arrived at Wiota, in LaFayette county, There they obtained lodging for the night in a stable. There was no road in the direction of the settlement, so procuring a guide. and buying some flour, and loading it on their backs, together with their tools and cooking utensils, they walked the rest of the way, arriving in

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the evening tired and footsore. They relate that every person whom they met or saw fled at their approach, and no wonder; for bearded, rough, and ragged as they were, loaded with all manner of baggage and tools, at a distance they more resembled a band of robbers than a party of honest immigrants.

Without delay the new comers began the building of a large hut, in addition to those already provided. A large excavation was made in the hillside, within the enclosure of what is now known as the old graveyard, close to the site of the present district school-house. Posts were set in the ground, and a roof made of boughs and wild hay; the sides were afterwards enclosed with boards hauled from Galena; the floor was at first the bare earth, this being afterwards covered with split poplar logs, the riven side uppermost; there were no windows or chimney. Some of the men were carpenters, all were workers, and the materials were close at hand, so that when in three days afterward all the colonists arrived they were passably sheltered, at least from wind and sun. Teams had been hired at Galena to convey the women, children, and provisions, but 361 not in sufficient numbers, so that all except the smallest and weakest had to take turns in riding and walking. On the always-to-be-remembered fifteenth day of August, 1845, all of the colonists, except those who strayed on the way, were assembled in the promised land of New Glarus.

The entire journey of over five thousand miles had been made by water, except the distance from Baltimore to Columbia, and from Galena to New Glarus. Taking into account the time consumed, and the vexatious delays and hardships undergone, the journey seems to have a parallel only in the exodus of the Jews from Egypt to their promised land. Only a hundred and eight remained out of the original hundred and ninety-three, the rest having from various causes deserted the party. Many of these deserters, however, in after years rejoined the colony and remained to share its labors and successes.

Sharing the then popular belief that America, was mostly an uncultivated wilderness, many of the colonists had, as I have before stated, brought with them from Switzerland their tools, pots, pans, and kettles of the old style—heavy and unwieldy, but having the sterling

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quality of durability. Despite the cost and trouble of transportation, it proved fortunate that they were brought; for in the utter absence of money at the first, no one could have bought anything, and these implements did duty for the whole settlement, being used in turn until each family had the means to buy their own. When the colonists arrived at their location, there was but little food on hand, except what they brought with them from Galena. The streams abounded in fish, but hooks and lines were few, so that one party was detailed to catch grasshoppers for bait, and another to catch fish. A large number were soon caught, but in the making up of the supplies salt had been forgotten. Hunger and want, however, are excellent cooks. The large hut answered the purpose of a shelter very well in the day time and in fair weather; but at night and on rainy days the inmates were crowded like sheep in a pen, to avoid the drip. New log houses, sixteen in number, rude and simple, roofed with wild hay. and capable of accommodating 362 two families each, were put up as fast as possible. When Christmas arrived, the colony was fairly housed, and in a measure prepared for winter.

### **Taking Boot .**

The beginning was now made. The land was bought and surveyed, but the immediate prospect was dismal enough. Far away from communication with their old home, with neighbors who were strangers and looked upon them with distrust; ignorant of the language, customs, manners, and laws of the new country; knowing nothing of the prevalent mode of cultivating the soil, and in want of proper clothing and the necessities of life, it certainly was a dark outlook to these colonists. If it had not been that the sum of a thousand dollars, provided in Switzerland for their assistance, arrived just at this time, it would indeed have gone hard with them. This money, under the direction of the leaders, was wisely expended: a portion for food and clothing, and the remainder for stock of various kinds.

Streiff wrote at this time to the Emigration Society: "I buy the provisions in large quantities and distribute them at cost, charging the amount to those who have no means, and

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receiving payment from those who are more fortunate. I supply all, even those who have means to buy, as they could not buy as cheaply themselves. Flour per cwt. costs two dollars, beef two and a half cents a lb. by the quarter, tallow four cents, lard four cents. and potatoes twenty-two cents per bushel. Should the people do well, I shall call upon them to repay these advances.”

The first winter passed quietly. Beyond planning for the work of the coming season, and providing the necessary fuel, little could be done. In the spring, the colonists drew lots for their twenty-acre portions, which were mostly meadow or prairie land. The timber-lot of eighty acres, some two miles away, was held in common: for more than a year, each colonist used from it what he needed, and then it was divided into two-and-a-half-acre lots, one to go 363 with each twenty-acre tract. It was agreed that the cost of the land at the time of purchase, together with advances made for any other purpose, should be repaid by the colonists without interest, within ten years. Should any person abandon or refuse to accept his tract, the next Swiss emigrant settler might take it. Only a few of these tracts were abandoned, and all were paid for before the ten years had expired.

It is proper to record a secession on a small scale. Small as the canton of Glarus is, ranges of lofty mountains divide it into two natural divisions, the Great and Little valleys. Each of these valleys, and in fact almost every village, has some peculiarity of language and customs, and the inhabitants of each section cherish a strong clannish feeling and affection for their own people. This clannish spirit, born in the valleys of the fatherland, showed itself from the start, in spite of their common interest in the present venture. Each group of colonists preferred to associate with their own valley people. This feeling was particularly strong among the Little-valley folk, perhaps because of the secluded location of their old home. About one-fourth of the settlers were from the Little-valley. Some matters of disagreement, trifling in themselves, caused a division, and this led to the secession of about twenty-five of these persons. A few Weeks after their arrival, they erected a separate shelter for themselves on the east bank of the stream, about eighty rods from the main habitation, and close to the present bridge. But in the spring they rejoined the

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main body. Several of these same families, after a year or two, abandoned the colony altogether, and removed to larger tracts of land in the towns of Mt. Pleasant and Sylvester, some twelve miles distant, where there is now a prosperous and large settlement, mainly of Little-valley people. The younger portion of the community have, however, outgrown the old clannish distrust, and the two groups have become, through intermarriage and other social ties, united and harmonious.

After the allotment of the land had been made, each colonist began to clear and plow his tract, in which labor the 364 women rendered assistance, as most of them were accustomed from childhood to outdoor work. At first the breaking was slow and laborious, being done with spades and shovels, for no teams or plows were obtained until later in the season. Potatoes, beans, and other vegetables were thus planted; and later, some sod corn. During the first spring (1846), drovers from Ohio brought droves of cows to Exeter. The colonists hearing of it set out to purchase, and being excellent judges of cattle soon selected the best animals of the herd, in sufficient numbers to give each family one. These cost twelve dollars per head, and were paid for out of the reserve fund before mentioned. Additional cabins were now built on a separate plat, so as to form a village, and each family soon had a home of its own. With a hut and a cow for each household, and vegetables growing, the frugal people began to feel contented and prosperous. Like a young tree the colony had at last taken root, and was growing.

Progress towards prosperity and independence was naturally slow, because of want of adequate means to buy tools and stock, and ignorance in the manner of tilling the soil and taking care of crops after the methods of this country. Generally, in their native home, no horses or plows can be used in agriculture,—spading, sowing, mowing, etc., all being done by hand. The hay and other products are carried on the backs of men and women. In fact, the colonists were ignorant of all farming methods, except the care of cattle and the making of butter and cheese. A beginning under such conditions would have been most discouraging to a people less used to toil and privation. Without money, without skill, many thousands of miles from those on whom they had claims for assistance, it

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required the exercise of the firmest determination, courage, and faith, to hold out. Too much credit cannot be given to those in whom lay the care and direction of the colony, in its first efforts to take root. Almost daily they were called upon to administer comfort and aid on the one hand, and to reprove or arbitrate on the other. They performed the functions of teacher, physician, pastor 365 and judge, with patience and tact. In this connection, Messrs. Streiff, Duerst, and J. J. Tschudy, and Pastor Streissguth deserve special mention. Notwithstanding their efforts, however, there was much dissatisfaction and trouble for two or three years. If it had not been for the difficulty in returning home from so remote a place, and the utter want of means, it is more than likely that enough would have left and returned to Switzerland, or gone to other places, to break up the colony. But most of them willingly or unwillingly accepted the situation, and made up their minds to win success.

After putting in their little crops, it was evident that something must be done to provide money for clothing and other necessities, until the land should nourish the people. Many of the men, and also women, sought and found work elsewhere,— the men in the lead mines at Exeter and Mineral Point, and on the farms of the older settlers in the district; while the women engaged themselves as domestic servants, washerwomen,—in fact, doing anything by which they could honestly earn something. In those days, a man's wages were fifty cents and board per day, and even this small amount was paid mostly in flour, meat, potatoes, or other produce, which the Swiss workmen carried home on their shoulders, often as far as twenty-five miles. Money was then almost unknown in rural Wisconsin. In this way they contrived to live, until they could subdue enough land from which to win food at home.

When the colonists went into winter quarters at the close of the year 1845, Judge Nicholas Duerst returned to his native Switzerland, much to the regret of all. Upon his arrival home, the friends of the colony prevailed upon J. J. Tschudy to accept the position he had vacated, Mr. Tschudy arrived at the settlement in the autumn of 1846, and resided there until 1856, during which time he ably continued the work of his predecessor. By

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his judicious counsel and management, he won the approval and esteem not only of his countrymen but of all classes of people.

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### **Material Progress .**

During the first two seasons, the requisite labor of building, and breaking land, was performed mostly in common. Out of the common fund, Streiff purchased four yoke of oxen. They were used in regular turn by each settler, for breaking, drawing wood, or other necessary work. These oxen are reported to have had fully as hard fare and service as any of the colonists. After becoming acquainted with the older settlers in the vicinity, the Swiss learned from them valuable lessons in the methods of American agriculture, and also obtained from the latter timely assistance. Among those often mentioned by the colonists with feelings of gratitude, were Capt. Otis Ross, Theodore Greenwood, Charles George, and the Armstrongs. Noah Phelps and Norman Churchill, of Monroe, are also mentioned as having, in a spirit of kindly charity, collected and brought to the colony a wagon-load of provisions and clothing for the destitute settlers, during the year 1847.

From 1847 to 1854, although the material progress of the colony was slow, it was sure. Every year's count showed an increasing gain in property. In a very short time the Swiss realized the truth of the Ohio-river captain's assertion that twenty acres in this country was as nothing; and all money, slowly and toilsomely earned, was carefully hoarded. As soon as fifty dollars was saved by a colonist, he promptly invested it in a forty-acre tract of government land. The journey to the land office at Mineral Point, thirty-five miles distant, was mostly made on foot, for prior to 1850 there were very few horses in the colony. Counts of stock, etc., in the colony, made in 1847 and 1849, resulted as follows:

1847. 1849. Horses 2 1 Bull 1 1 Oxen and steers 16 41 Cows 37 49 Heifers 15 40 Calves 25 51 Sheep 15 Hogs 193 1,482 Land broke (acres) 109 280 Population 104 125 367

I find from the records, the following list of heads of families, who were the original colonists of 1845:

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Wife. Children. Fridolin Babler 1 2 Oswald Babler 1 5 Caspar Becker — 1 Fridolin Becker 1 1 Jost Becker 1 — Balthasar Duerst 1 4 Mathias Duerst 1 2 Fridolin Hefti 1 2 Fridolin Hoesli 1 Henry Hoesli 1 2 Marcus Hoesli — 2 Mathew Hoesli 1 2 Fridolin Legler, Sr. 1 5 Fridolin Legler, Jr. 1 1 George Legler 1 5 J. Caspar Legler 1 5 Abraham Schindler 1 3 Balthasar Schindler — 1 David Schindler — — Mathias Schmid 1 4 Anton Stauffacher 1 4 Henry Stauffacher 1 6 Jacob Stauffacher 1 3 1Peter Stauffacher's family 1 4 Rudolph Stauffacher 1 4 Fridolin Streiff 1 2 Hilarius Wild 1 1

1 He died on the journey, at Galena.

Total: 26 men; 23 Wives; 73 children—122 in all.

Up to the twentieth of November, 1846, seven persons had died, and two were born in the colony, while eight colonists and their families had gone away, leaving their lots. Up to the same date there were twenty dwellings in the colony. From the account rendered, we find the whole amount of money advanced by the association for the founding of the colony to have been \$5,600. This includes cost of exploration and location, passage of emigrants, purchase of twelve hundred and eighty acres of land, and subsistence.

As might be expected, the reports of the colonists in their first letters to friends at home were of the most contradictory character. Some were hopeful, while others were full of complaints of hardship, hunger, and privation, and the latter had a great deal of foundation for their tales of woe; for as late as 1850 the Rev. William Streissguth, the first pastor, writes that, owing to the breaking of the threshing 368 machine, no wheat could be had to take to mill. In consequence, for some days there was not a pound of flour in the settlement, and he ate three meals a day of boiled potatoes alone. He further writes that, while on Sundays the people are simply but decently dressed; on week days one often meets those who from the number and character of the patches composing their clothing, might pass for traveling sample cards; sun and moon could freely look through their rents. "But," he adds, "this is so common that it causes no embarrassment, there being no good reason why knees and elbows should not rejoice in the sunshine, as well as hands and face." He further says: "Our colonists console each other with the hopeful thought that they

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are in the way of attaining, in the near future, a pleasant home free from debt, when they will be able to regard the needs of the body more in accordance with their wishes.”

From 1850 on, it became evident that the colony had taken root firmly, and was thriving: there were nearer and better markets for their spare produce; and the constantly increasing acreage of tilled land showed thrift and progress in stronger terms than reports or letters.

The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, and the consequent immense rise in the price of wheat, the principal product of the west at that time, caused a large and increasing immigration to the Mississippi valley, and the New Glarus colony received a steady acquisition of Swiss immigrants each year, mostly of a class who possessed sufficient means to buy land and stock, and to make improvements. The new comers were not only from Glarus, but from other parts of Switzerland as well. Families and individuals from elsewhere in the fatherland, settled in Green county, in close proximity to the original colony,—notably the Bernese, in the towns of Jefferson, Clarno, and Washington.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, viii., p. 438, for Mr. Luchsinger's account of the establishment of the colony of people from Bilten, in old Glarus, in 1847, at a point five miles from New Glarus. — Ed.

From time to time, immigrants would come out, and after 369 a season become dissatisfied and return to Switzerland, or go elsewhere in America. Yet on the whole, most of those who came to New Glarus remained, and at the close of the year 1854 it could be safely announced that the colony was a success. The enterprise was standing proof of what a small amount of money, well directed and expended, may do to better the condition of the honest poor of overcrowded places in the old and new world. As the money thus laid out has long since been refunded, the founding of this colony cost literally nothing, while the benefit to thousands has been priceless.

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Of these hardy first-comers but few survive, and they are year by year becoming fewer; those who remain are enjoying the peaceful evening of their lives in comfort and ease. All those who practiced the old-time industry, economy, and sobriety, are, with their descendants, far better off than it would have been possible for them to become in their old home.

Lands in Green county have steadily advanced in price, especially since the advent of cheese factories and railroads. Cheap lands are no longer to be had and there is but little disposition to sell at all, for to the Swiss there is only one New Glarus. Numbers of stalwart young men come each year from the old home across seas, to found new homes here. On the other hand, many young men have each year gone to the fertile prairies of the farther west, settling either in colonies or as independent settlers. Dodge county in Minnesota, Lincoln county in Dakota, Kossuth and Humboldt counties in Iowa, and the states of California and Oregon, contain large numbers of young men who have gone forth from New Glarus.

### **Religious History .**

I have sketched the material progress of the colony, but my work would not be complete unless the social, educational, religious, and political history received some mention. The established and prevailing religion of the canton of Glarus is the Reformed Church of Switzerland. 24 370 About one-fifth of the people adhere to the Roman Catholic church, and by the terms of ancient compacts the government supports these two churches in proportion to the number of their members. The New Glarus colonists were all Protestants, and members of the Reformed church. During the first four years, no regular religious services were held. At the bedsides of the sick, and at the graves of the dead, would be read the impressive services of the church. The hymns and psalms were kept in memory by frequent practice on Sundays. At irregular intervals, itinerant preachers of the Methodist church made their appearance, and their rude but earnest exhortations, and their wild and mournfully-beautiful songs, were heard in the land. Hungry and thirsty as the people were

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for religious sympathy and teaching, they did not stop to question to what church these wandering preachers belonged.

In the autumn of 1849, the congregations of old Glarus awakened to a sense of the necessity and propriety of supplying religious instruction to the colony in America. William Streissguth, a graduate of the Mission House at Basle, was selected as preacher and missionary to the Wisconsin Swiss. On the sixth of April, 1850, he started from Basle, and on the twenty-third of June arrived at New Glarus, being warmly greeted by the colonists. He writes: "The greeting could not have been heartier, or more joyous. I thanked the giver of all good gifts, by whom I felt that the care of this portion of his people had been intrusted to me. My fears and prejudices vanished, as I met and conversed with them. I found that the religious feeling and sentiment had from disuse become only dormant, and not, as I and others had feared, extinct. Only regular and faithful work is required, to cause the nobler qualities again to assume control. Of course five years of utter neglect in the matter of schools and religious training, can hardly be made good by five years of even double zeal and effort."

In the little plain log church, neat but devoid of ornament, on the first Sunday after his arrival, Mr. Streissguth held divine service, and consecrated the building to the worship of God. He adds, in his letter: "While this temple is in no way to be likened to that of Solomon, yet was our joy and thankfulness as great as that of Solomon, when he with all of Israel consecrated his temple." On the Tuesday following, the people were organized as an independent congregation of the Swiss Reformed church. J.J. Tschudy was elected president, and a board of capable trustees was selected. Arrangements were made for religious and secular teaching of the children in the German language, which after five years of almost total intermission was found to be a difficult task. Streissguth writes: "During the first hours of my labors as a teacher, I hardly realized that the flock around me were Christian children, and not wild heathen." But the zeal of the young missionary was

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equal to the occasion, and enthusiasm and tact succeeded in bringing order into the minds of his pupils, and restoring the knowledge of religious truth in the minds of young and old.

The intrepid pastor had only his own strength to support him in his work. There was no conference, no synod, no general assembly, to aid or instruct him. He was as much a pioneer, thrown upon his own resources, as in their way were the colonists. At this time (1850), the congregation numbered sixty-four members, all heads of families except two or three. The pastor's duties were to hold service each Sunday morning, and religious instruction in the afternoon; during the week, there was instruction in reading and writing. He visited all of the families regularly, and in cases of sickness often served both as physician and pastor. As a missionary he had received the usual medical training. In short, he was a typical missionary, who aimed to perform the work of his Master thoroughly and well. At this time a branch Swiss colony, five miles distant, called Bilten, was founded. Streissguth also went to that place every four weeks, to preach and instruct. For the first year of his labor, and for his expenses of passage from Switzerland, he received from the council of the parishes in old Glarus two hundred dollars. For the second year, the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars was 372 voted. So much work for so little pay has since the days of the Apostles probably not been rendered.

The first house of worship in New Glarus was built of hewn logs in 1849, by voluntary contributions of labor, material, and money. The building was used also for a school-house, and place of public meeting. The school district bought it, when the stone church of to-day was built, and, after the building of the present school-house the pioneer structure was sold and removed several miles east of the village, and used as a farm house. The stone church was built in 1858. It is a solid, plain structure, with a square tower, surmounted by a small dome containing two bells. Streissguth remained until 1855, being succeeded by Rev. John Zimmermann, also from Switzerland, who remained until 1859. The present pastor, Rev. John T. Etter, came in 1860, and has without interruption served the congregation to the present time, a period of thirty-two years.

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A second church belongs to the Evangelical Association, whose manner of worship is the same as that of the Methodists. Their first itinerant preachers came into the vicinity in 1847. The Swiss of that day, and, in a measure, of the present day, regarded any one of their nation as degenerate and an apostate who became attached to any other denomination than the Reformed church; but in spite of opposition, dislike, and even persecution, converts to the new sect were made in some numbers. In 1859, the new congregation had so far gained in numbers and wealth as to be able to build a large and convenient meeting-house, on a hill about two miles south from the village — they not venturing at that time, in consequence of the strong prejudice against them, to build in the hamlet itself. In 1865, this feeling had so far softened that it was resolved to move the building into the village. The wholesome protection of the laws, combined with a more liberal and fraternal spirit, have removed every fear of trouble, so that now meetings are regularly held and well attended. In the year 1890, a fine large frame church was built in the village, on a commanding site, by this congregation. The frequent changes in the ministry of the Evangelical church make it difficult to give a list of its preachers. Its congregation comprises about one-fourth of the people, some of whom are among the most worthy and progressive citizens of the community.

may charitably be presumed that the former dislike of the orthodox Swiss to those of their people who changed their faith had its origin in the conservative veneration for things as they are in Switzerland, rather than in any spirit of blind persecution.

In the Reformed church. this veneration for what is customary at home causes strict adherence to the ancient forms of worship. The New Glarus congregation is nominally in connection with the synod of eastern Switzerland, but the relation is of no practical benefit to either. The hymn and prayer books, and catechisms, are imported as needed, none of this kind being printed or used in the United States. The necessary expenses in support of the Reformed church are defrayed by levying yearly a tax equally on the heads of families, rich and poor. The amount is determined at the annual meeting, at which only the male

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members attend or vote. The meeting also makes or alters the rules for the good of the congregation. Repeated efforts have been made by kindred synods in the United States to cause this church at New Glarus to join them, but all attempts in that direction have failed on account of an independent spirit which will not brook even the semblance of control. The members say that in the days of their early struggles and poverty, no helping hand was extended to them from any synod, and they will have none of their connection now.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Luchsinger's article in *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, viii., gives at pp. 429–431, an interesting description of the curious church services and customs at New Glarus.— Ed.

### Education .

As I have already stated, the matter of common schools received some attention soon after the colony was founded. Little, however, has even yet been done towards a higher education. A limited number of young men have with commendable energy gone to other places, and acquired such advanced instruction as their means afforded. Several of these have become successful teachers, merchants, and professional men. Nevertheless, sufficient attention has not yet been paid to the training of the many bright young men and women for professional careers. One reason, presumably, is the notion, somewhat prevalent among the elders, that such education spoils boys for workers, and girls for housewives. This apathy in the matter of higher education, and in providing intellectual food and enjoyment for all, was excusable at the beginning of the settlement; at that time, and for a number of years afterward, all the best thought, labor, and energy was necessary to provide food, shelter, and clothing. But the habit of thought in that direction became in too many instances a second nature, lasting long after the necessity for parsimonious economy had passed away. As a consequence, the intellectual development has not kept pace with the material condition of the people. Every young person has longings for mental enjoyment, which must not be ignored. If the duty of parents and teachers to provide intellectual and educating recreations has been neglected, he is perforce obliged to seek his companions and pleasures where he can find them. Hence the saloon has

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prospered at the expense of the literary society, and card and billiard tables at the expense of public libraries and lyceums. However, better things are hoped for in this direction. Many parents have awakened to a sense of the necessity of doing something more for their children than getting for them money and lands; and the next generation will doubtless show a prouder array of men and women who can and have distinguished themselves in the learned professions.<sup>1</sup>

1 See *Ibid.*, pp. 432–434, for historical sketch of the New Glarus schools, English and German. The first district school (English) was started in 1847 by a Mr. Cowan, in Balthasar Schindler's log house. The first district school-house was built in 1849, Peter Jenny being the teacher during some six years following. The German schools in the village were ably conducted, a Mr. Ernst being the first teacher. A favorite master, F. Knobel, of old Glarus, taught from 1867 to 1890, dying in Milwaukee in 1892. On pp. 437,438, *Ibid.*, Mr. Luchsinger describes the extensive manufacture of cheese in New Glarus. Early industries are described on p. 437, — the first saw-mill (water power) being built by Joshua Wild in 1851; David Klassy built the first grist-mill in 1862; in 1867, Dr. Blumer & Co. operated the first brewery. Upon p. 431, the author gives an entertaining account of the religious festival of Kilbi, on the last Sunday of September in each year.—Ed.

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### **Retrospect .**

The political history of the settlement is not an exciting one. The township of New Glarus was named and organized as such in April, 1850, prior to which the territory comprising it had been attached for civil purposes to the adjoining town of York, and was popularly known as “the Swiss colony.” The plat containing the colony lands, parcelled into sixty twenty acre lots, was surveyed by A. W. Comfort, August 29, 1845. The village was laid out and platted by Samuel Spangler, of Monroe, in 1851. From the beginning the political preferences of the people have been mostly for the democratic party; two-thirds or more

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of the colonists vote that way. It is another instance of the conservatism of these Swiss settlers, that they have mainly adhered through all changes to the political creed they first embraced. For a man to change his politics is quite as rare among them as to change his religion. Nevertheless, a candidate known to be worthy and competent will get their support, irrespective of party. Elections are for the most part conducted quietly, and but little of the usual electioneering jobbing or trading is done. Public speakers of all parties are always respectfully heard and well received. J. J. Tschudy was the first Swiss elected to a county office, being chosen register of deeds in 1858; he served as such two terms, and then was elected county clerk four times, serving from 1864 to 1873. Mathias Marty was elected county clerk in 1862, and from 1872 to 1886. John Luchsinger was elected five times to the state assembly. In the session of 1887, both the Green county members, John Luchsinger and J. O. Zimmerman, were Swiss; the former was also county treasurer from 1883 to 1887. Edward Ruegger was elected sheriff in 1882, and Thomas Luchsinger in 1890.

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No lawyer has ever located in the settlement. The Swiss have a horror of litigation, and it is only when all other means fail that one resorts to courts of justice. The few cases in which the aid of a lawyer has been required were managed by attorneys from Monroe. With a people so industrious and economical, there can be little or no litigation. Possibly this characteristic may have been imparted in some degree to the other citizens of Green county, for true it is that in proportion to the population and wealth there are less days of court and fewer lawyers there than in any other like county in the state.

In a less degree this may be said of the physicians. The plain, simple habits of living, and regular exercise, combine with the healthful climate and pure water to keep the people healthy above the average.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Tschudy was the first to render assistance to the sick, he having some knowledge of medicine and a small stock of medicine when he came over. Rev. Mr. Streissguth

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afterwards supplied medical aid to the colonists; and later Bonjour, a French Swiss, dispensed drugs. In 1853 Dr. S. Blumer, a good physician from Glarus, arrived, and remained until 1866, when he removed to Iowa. His son, J. J. Blumer, M. D., has been located in New Glarus for twenty years, and is justly considered an excellent physician.

In 1861, when the civil war broke out, the Swiss in New Glarus and vicinity furnished their full proportion of volunteers, ninety-eight boys in blue, who did not dishonor the memory of their brave sires who fought the battles of Swiss independence in the fatherland.

In 1887, the Illinois Central railway projected and built a railway from Freeport, via Monroe, to Madison, the line running within three miles of New Glarus. Efforts were made to obtain a branch of this road to run to the village, but no definite promise could be obtained from the company. Pending the negotiations, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway, whose territory had been invaded by the new road, sent its agents to New Glarus with a definite proposition to build a road from its terminus at Albany. With business-like promptness, the New Glarus people seized this opportunity to connect themselves with 377 the rest of the world, and in a short time the terms proposed by the St. Paul company were agreed to. In the space of four months, the cars were running into New Glarus village, and the hitherto-secluded Swiss settlement was brought into close and speedy contact with the outer world. Undoubtedly, the influx of new people and fresh thought, which will come from this closer communication with the rest of mankind, will be of vast and permanent benefit. Already, a few Americans and Germans have intermarried and settled among the Swiss, and while a definite dividing line of language and customs will probably remain for many years, the former exclusiveness has vanished.

The old-time, simple, generous, and genuine hospitality is still practised. The veriest miser among the Swiss of New Glarus would be ashamed to have it said that he was inhospitable. The homely, hearty manners towards each other and to strangers show the kindly spirit of the people. Not but what they are good haters, when wronged or affronted; a real or fancied injury often causes a coldness which lasts through life.

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In such a community, so closely connected by ties of kindred and nativity, tidings of local events are naturally of the most interest. Hence the German county newspaper, the *Green County Herald*, published at Monroe by R. Kohli, a Swiss, receives a large patronage, and its weekly visits are always welcome. However, the local neighborhood gossip is still carried from house to house in the primitive way, with a speed that appears marvelous. The news of births, deaths, marriages, and other events, spreads into the remotest valleys by word of mouth. It has often been said that one cannot jostle even the remotest corner of the Swiss settlement but the whole of it feels the jar. In other words, it is never safe to oppress or slander one Swiss, unless the offender is prepared to cope with an endless number of relatives.

Old-fashioned simplicity in dress is gradually yielding to the commands of fashion. Both young men and young women have discovered that it is as perfectly proper to go 378 clothed in as good material as they can afford, as it is to build houses and barns well and tasteful. Maidens have found out that a dress up with the times enhances their natural charms; and where ten years ago every woman made her own gowns in the plainest manner, and with the utmost saving of material in quality and quantity, now several fashionable dressmakers have steady and paying employment. The elders, however, still avoid the fashions, and dress in the simple styles of yore.

As a matter of course, after an absence from their old home for so many years, the attachment to the fatherland has diminished. Yet intercourse with the friends and relatives among the mountains across the water is quite generally kept up; newspapers and letters are regularly exchanged, and some of the old-timers read the little Swiss newspapers with more interest than they would the great American journals. It is more than a surmise that in the hearts of most of the early emigrants the idea long existed that they would only remain in this country long enough to amass a modest competence, and then return to their old home to enjoy it. Indeed, the people of some other nationalities who come to this country at the present time are known to entertain and carry out this idea. Many

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Swiss who have gained means have revisited the old home,—some of them a number of times,—but very few have remained there. The halo which memory had east over the scenes of childhood and youth was found to have vanished, and there remained only the reality of the old, terrible struggle with poverty which had driven them forth. They returned to America more American than ever. To the Swiss-American, the grand distances, the great opportunities, the liberal thought, and the public institutions of this country, seem by comparison to make the conditions of life in the old home appear narrow, mean, and unbearable. As some have expressed it, there seems to be hardly room there to breathe. Yet the love for the old home, and its heroic history, cannot be extinguished, and next to being Americans the pride of a Swiss is to be a Swiss. While apparently he quietly submits to being called a German by those who judge of his 379 nation by his language, yet in his heart he vigorously protests,—much as a Scotchman would, to be called an Englishman, or an Irishman.

How long this Swiss community at New Glarus will remain distinctive as now cannot be foretold; but judging from the history of colonies of German-speaking people in some of the older states, it will be safe to predict that the Swiss dialect will exist and be spoken here two hundred years hence, and that the people then living will bear the stamp of the early influence.

Crime has been rare in New Glarus; larceny is almost unknown; locked houses and barns are the exception, and every one has confidence in his neighbor's honesty. The most frequent offenses are disturbances caused by too free indulgence in liquor, or perhaps by social rivalry among the young men. There have been but two murders in the township, from the beginning, and in one of these two strangers were the principals.

The success of this colony has attracted wide attention, and much inquiry has been made in regard to the manner of founding it. Kentucky and Tennessee have with great success adopted the colony plan for the settlement of their mountain lands with Swiss. Experience has demonstrated that transplanting people in groups or colonies is the most

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successful way. Such groups, taken from the same neighborhood, carry with them a feeling of confidence and mutual support, so necessary for the growth and well-doing of communities. They can more freely help and sympathize with each other than if they were strangers, and are not so liable to become homesick from that feeling of utter loneliness and desertion which depresses the settler who comes by himself to a new land.

The colonial, or rather the communal, plan of mutual labor and assistance, which was one of the features in the inception of the New Glarus colony, was abandoned as soon as the colonists discovered that twenty acres was as nothing in this country. Those colonists to whose lot fell desirable tracts retained them, and as they could earn or borrow money made haste to enlarge their fields by the purchase 380 of other good land. Others, to whom fell rough tracts, either left them or never took possession, and preëmpted or bought claims outside the original boundaries. The eyes of all were early opened to the fact that government land at a dollar and a quarter an acre was a good thing to get plenty of; so, before 1856, all the government land in the vicinity was purchased, and the colony as a mutual institution under the control of directors had ceased to exist. A sturdy, growing Swiss American settlement has taken its place. As a nurse to nourish the young community, the parental colony system in this instance Proved to be the best.

Thus have been evolved from feeble beginnings, this New Glarus colony, and other Swiss settlements in Green county, which were transplanted in 1845 from the headwaters of the Rhine to the headwaters of the Mississippi. The movement started with about a hundred poverty-stricken people, whose very destitution anchored them to their new home, compelling them to stay where they were placed. These have now (1892) grown into communities aggregating eight thousand persons, whose landed possessions have increased from twelve hundred and eighty acres of wild land to more than ninety thousand acres, fertile and improved. They have at their command comfortable homes and all modern improvements in machinery. As farmers, they are now equal to the best. In the cities and villages, they are successful merchants, artisans, and professional men, and are deemed good citizens and neighbors. They are prosperous beyond comparison with what

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they would have been bad they or their parents not had the courage to leave the old home. There is abundant cause to thank God that he guided their thoughts and their footsteps to this wide land of freedom and plenty; that he has blessed their efforts with success; and that their future and that of their children is so full of promise.

Honor and credit are due to all of the early settlers for their unflinching courage and untiring industry; but those especially are worthy of mention, whose good judgment, skill, and intelligence guided the feeble efforts of the colony in its infancy and youth, who did their best to smooth over the rough places, and whose faith and courage inspired hope when hardship and want bred discouragement. The names of F. Streiff and Nicholas Duerst, the pioneers; Rev. William Streissguth, pastor and physician; J. J. Tschudy, arbitrator, teacher, physician, and adviser; F. Egger, Mathias Duerst, George Legler, and Peter Jenny Elmer, men whose wise judgment and counsel were directed to the good of the community, all deserve in particular to be mentioned. Neither should we omit the members of the association in old Glarus, whose judicious action, and whose faith and money, made it possible to plant this stake in the wilderness.

### **Memorial Celebrations .**

The year 1853 saw the first celebration of the fourth of July at New Glarus. The “reasons why we celebrate” were given to the settlers by J. J. Tschudy. Since that time the day has annually and loyally been celebrated in a manner not behind that of native American settlements.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the settlement was celebrated in 1870, with all the feeling and interest of a popular holiday. There were speeches and historical papers relating to the early times that tried the endurance and courage of the founders; and songs of praise and rejoicing attested the general good feeling. A great number of the people of New Glarus were present, and many who had removed to other places made this celebration the occasion for a visit to the old colony and to old friends.

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In view of the fact that the original colonists were rapidly getting fewer, it was decided to hold another celebration in 1885,— the fortieth. It was held on the twelfth of August, in a small grove just west of the village of New Glarus, in sight of the valley down which the tired group of emigrants had, forty years before, trudged their weary way into the wilderness which was to be their new home. The people from the surrounding Country and from afar 382 gathered in great numbers; and with the little group of twelve toil-worn, wrinkled, and gray-haired survivors in their midst, celebrated in appropriate fashion the event of the coming of the fathers. In places of honor, decorated with flowers, were seated the venerable remnant of that band of men and women who had broken the way for posterity. The eyes of the founders were dim with emotion when one after the other related his or her tale of toil, hardship, and poverty. But their hearts swelled with thanksgiving to the God who had upheld them and crowned their efforts with success; who had not only permitted them to see the promised land, but to enter and enjoy the fruits thereof.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The five hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Swiss republic was in 1891 celebrated in all parts of the world where Swiss had settled in numbers. But nowhere was it observed with more spirit and enthusiasm than in Green county. At first, merely a modest gathering was proposed; but as preparations were being made, the interest in the matter grew, until it was found imperative that a demonstration worthy of the event must be made. On one of the finest of September days, in a location at the village of New Glarus by nature perfectly “shaped for such purpose,” an immense concourse of people—estimated at from six to eight thousand— was gathered from all parts of southern Wisconsin, and assisted in the ceremonies of the occasion. Excellent speaking, singing, music, and tableaux occupied the day to the delight and enjoyment of the vast audience, composed of people of all nationalities, who had come to honor the memory of the founding of the oldest and bravest republic of modern times.

Language.— At New Glarus, is spoken one of the broadest and most pronounced of the many Swiss dialects of the German language, enriched by several forceful words not

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found in any German or other dictionary. Many of these words and phrases, peculiar to old Glarus and its Wisconsin offshoot, are unpronounceable save by the native, and at once stamp the speaker's origin. Correct utterance of these, is the sure test of a Glarusite.

To these few last colonists, to the diary of Mathias Duerst, and to the reports on the colony made by Tschudy and Streissguth, and printed in Switzerland in 1847 and 1849, in addition to his own recollections, the author is indebted for the facts and data given in this account; and he tenders his sincere thanks to all those whose information and encouragement have made its preparation possible.